

OBSERVATIONS
ON THE
DECLARATION
OF THE
CATHOLIC SOCIETY OF DUBLIN;
IN WHICH
THE NATURE OF THEIR DEMANDS,
AS WELL AS
THE POLICY OF THE PENAL RESTRICTIONS
EXISTING AGAINST THEM
ARE,
BRIEFLY CONSIDERED.

BY
A PROTESTANT WHIG.

Councillor Burrowes.

DUBLIN:

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CHRIST CHURCH-LANE, ADJOINING THE FOUR COURTS.

1792.



DEDICATION

TO THE

WHIG-CLUB OF IRELAND.

My Lords and Gentlemen,

TO YOU, who have embodied yourselves as watchful centinels to guard over the Constitution of the realm, and resist each arbitrary encroachment of power.

TO YOU, who have covenanted to
“support and maintain the PRINCIPLES
“ESTABLISHED AT THE REVOLUTION;”
and,

and, in doing so, to uphold the RELIGION OF THE STATE, the present Address, will not seem ill-timed, or obtrusive, when presented by one of your own body, warmly attached to BOTH.

The sentiments of an individual have sometimes arrested the arm of popular fanaticism, and, by disclosing the calamities which might result from their indiscriminate interference, restored tranquility to the disaffected multitude.

By similar attempts, the vulgar may be undeceived, and induced, perhaps, not to risk the blessings of toleration, which they now enjoy, by any rude commotion.

But, it is chiefly, towards you;—the conservators of Liberty, and guardians of its sacred fire,—that they would look, in the hour of danger, and of difficulty. Your resolves would then, become the bright cynosure

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cynofure that ſhould guide their wavering and unſteady courſe. At ſuch a time, you would relinquish every juſt oppoſition to power; and, if neceſſity ſhould demand the ſacrifice, unite in ſuch a cauſe with the objects of your former diſlike, for the PUBLIC GOOD. For 'tis that alone which demands all your vigilance, and, for that alone, ſhould you ſacrifice all your prepoſſeſſions.

Your Country, your Religion, your properties, would be all at ſtake, ſhould Popery, and popiſh principles invade your rights, and enter by force, or ſtratagem, the ſanctuary of the Conſtitution; introduced under the fictitious guiſe of TOLERATION, by ſuch as

“ dolis inſtructi et arte Pelasga,”

would paſs for diſintereſted Patriots; but who,—

“ Talibus inſidiis perjurique arte Sinonis;”

would betray the people into meaſures

destructive of national liberty, and the public faith.

There are, too, those who, because a few Members of your Club have been seduced into measures repugnant to the essential maxims of the institution, roundly assert, that you, as a body, are answerable for their lapse in principle, and are concealed abettors of their demands. A particular reply to such insinuations, however malignant or unjust, would be unworthy of men, who possess so eminently, the public confidence and esteem.

But, nevertheless, you are called upon, as public characters, embodied for the public good; and many of you, Members of the Legislature, to step forward, and enter into some Resolution worthy of yourselves. At a crisis, like this, when silence becomes criminal, and might pass for acquiescence

cence on your part, under claims which, as Whigs and Supporters of Constitutional Freedom, you cannot but condemn.

In the following "OBSERVATIONS,"—thus submitted to your notice, I have endeavoured to represent your present sentiments, as similar to those promulgated in 1688. And to awaken the Nation from the danger of falling under Popery and Arbitrary Power: and in doing so, I trust, I have acted the part of a good Citizen and a sound Patriot.

Impressed with an high sense and thorough conviction of your integrity and ability, I have ventured to address myself, particularly, to you, in the language, and with the sentiments and sincerity of a friend to the Constitution, and,

A PROTESTANT WHIG.

Dublin, January 12th. 1792.

ERRATA.

Page 3, line 23, for, acts, read pacts.—
Line 26, for, warned, read warmed. In Note
of page 24, line 3, for, *n'aucoit*, read *n'auroit*,
Page 34, line 22, for, the, read he, page 46,
line 21, for, guarantee, read guaranty.



OBSERVATIONS, &c.

THE revival of religious disputes cannot, in the present day, but be a subject rather to lament over, than quicken by the flame of controversy. Memory reluctantly turns back on the horrors of fanatic fury, and the mild spirit of philosophy, as she turns over the historic page, stained with the sad catalogue, and glowing with far other fires, than those which philanthropy has kindled, blushes for the errors of humanity, and breathes a wish, that those scenes of blood and carnage may not be revived amongst us.

In thus addressing myself to the public mind, already too much heated as well as agitated, I shall endeavour to confine myself within the bounds prescribed to political writings; and, studiously avoiding the narrow and intricate paths that lead to metaphysical disquisition, rest

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only on such particular principles and tenets as may serve to illustrate the foundation and policy of those restrictions the established religion has laid upon all who are not of its communion.

The prohibition I have thus laid upon myself, will not, I fear, be easy in its accomplishment.—Religion being so intimately connected with the policy of the state, may often make it necessary for me to deviate a little from my plan, and in following the clue that should lead me to *first principles*, it may often be necessary to canvass the doctrines of a superstition sanctified by age, and whose rights and mysteries, like those of Eleusis, should not be disclosed too lightly or inconsiderately. If I have stolen into the temple, and removed the veil, which concealed those incomprehensible attributes peculiar to their faith; let not the Holy Catholic Church, or her venerable priesthood, attribute the intrusion to idle curiosity or malignant dislike. Contented with his own religion, the author of this treatise was never solicitous to dive into another's rights; nor could the latter be ever a motive, with his mind, to disturb their ceremonies.—Political research alone unfolded the connection, and revealed to his ardent enquiry, the subtle and artful wiles by which ambitious and aspiring Churchmen, fought

sought to subdue the consciences of men; and that infallible and supreme jurisdiction, those "reverend venders of trifles," arrogated to themselves, in order to establish that arbitrary sway under which they might be benefited.—For "the* acquisition of absolute command," says an eloquent and enlightened modern historian, "over the consciences and understandings of a congregation, however obscure or despised by the world, is more truly grateful to the human heart, than the possession of the most despotic power imposed, by arms and conquest, on a reluctant people."

And it is this original and inherent principle in human nature, that should guide the speculative politician in all his theories: —the natural love of power and dominion in man and the probable abuse in his exercise of it.—'Tis this effort at controul, that has tinged with blood the annals of all nations, and to resist which, men first aggregated together in republics, and framed wholesome laws, and entered into solemn acts and covenants. Let it not then be said by such as are jealous of their faith, and are attached to, and tenacious of, its doctrines, that I am warned by animosity against them and their Creed.—"Id io anche son pit-
B 2 "tore."

* Vide Gibbon's Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, vol. 2d. p. 291.

“tore.”—*I too am a Christian*, and have learned to be “in charity with all men,”—and, without quarreling with his abstinence from wine and his ablutions, could adore, along with the pious musfulman, the giver of all good, the God of the universe!—It is not the religion itself, its tenets, or its professors, I wish to treat of here; it is its necessary influence on the constitution of the state, and its want of analogy to our particular government.

When priests become politicians—they discredit their function and travel out of their callings; and something *more* than toleration is to be suspected from their interference. They were originally sent by Christ and his Apostles to visit the sick, to clothe the naked, and to feed the hungry, and not to embroil the state, or raise discontents among the people.—They quietly and peaceably enjoy the present blessings of toleration, and might console themselves for any temporary or political restrictions with the hope of that reward which is promised by their system, as well as ours, to a “meek and lowly spirit.”

They are restless and dissatisfied, and as fellow citizens and men, they demand attention. Is their case as hard as has been stated by
their

their * *Declaration*? and has the legislature imposed any new or oppressive restrictions?—Far from it. The laws coercing Roman Catholic Dissenters, which were framed by the wisdom and precaution of our ancestors as a barrier against future outrage and enormity, have been gradually relaxed.—Our unhappy country, bleeding through every pore from the stabs inflicted on her by her unnatural children, required a bandage for her wounds. The legislative web was wove, strong and compact, to restrain this life-blood torrent: time and quiet has restored her to a better health, and we, who, though remote ones, are still sufferers—forgive the phrenzy we cannot forget.

But who are the discontented and repining amongst us? and who are they who would conjure up this phantom of religious discord? Are they the steady and united body of the Roman Catholic persuasion,---galled and goaded by recent injuries and existing grievances? Or, do those murmurs of discontent, and those loud demands for redress of fictitious or exaggerated grievances, proceed from a repining junto, stirred up and collected by a few factious and discontented partizans:---not so much of their own body, as outrageous and disappointed apostates

* Vide Declaration of the Catholic Society of Dublin.

apostates from ours, ever ready to disturb the government, that, in the scramble for power, they may reap some stealthy advantage?

Are they of the first catholic families in the empire,—from most of whom the brand of attainder has been wiped off, and who hold their possessions undisturbed by the vigilance of a jealous government,—and some of whom have been, and daily may be, restored to their rank in the constitution?—But these are not the men who repine—They are respected amongst us, and hold their possessions:—They are those who may be found in all governments,—the indigent and restless, who can lose nothing and may gain much, and who, by the extent of their demands, would unbinge and overthrow the order and symmetry of the state. Men, who borrow the cloak of religion and the mask of pious zeal, to cajole and deceive the credulous multitude, ever fond of change, and ready to aid any revolution, in which they think they see their own aggrandisement, and the discomfiture and overthrow of the wise, the learned, and their superiors.

X Such are the few, who despising gradual or temporising measures—*demand* a repeal of the “whole code” existing against them: and
instead

instead of presenting an humble petition for redress of grievances, to the legislature, publish and disseminate, declarations of right, founded on the *natural* and not the *civil* equality of man, and tending to level all human distinctions:--Who, taking the example of a recent revolution, would act over again, but on a different theatre, the bloody acts of an headstrong and ungovernable democracy furious and sanguinary in every change, but most so, where religion is the prologue to the tragedy. To them the pageantry and show of monarchy is most acceptable, and more grateful to their minds would be the iron yoke of one despot, by flattering whose passions they might conciliate his favour, and reap his rewards, than many mild governors, who would check their vices and suppress their excesses. France, it is true, now breathes, from a carnage that stained the manners and corrupted the urbanity of a polite nation; and the dreadful and savage acts committed at the commencement of the Revolution, even by those whose sex and education have ever fashioned them for the soft and consoling offices of humanity, evince—how dreadful the fury, and how inordinate the revenge of a people excited against their governors and loosed to wild and promiscuous massacre!

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The argument no doubt is an imposing one ; where *natural equality* is the object professed to be contended for, and it shall be my business to show, hereafter, how widely distinct *civil* rights are from *natural* and arbitrary ones.

The French Revolution was a great epoch in the annals of mankind, and even sympathy rejoices in the destruction of its Bastille and those horrid prisons which despot jealousy had raised, and in which were confined victims to her detested policy, untried and uncondemned by the people.---But can we cease to lament the dissipation and overthrow of a proud and high minded nobility, whose maxim was honor; or the wretched sovereign whose unhappiness was to have been educated in the principles, and called to mount the throne, of arbitrary ancestors.—A tear is due to their particular sufferings ;—but a whole nation in chains is an object of horrible sublimity, and the united effort of the people to emancipate themselves from the tyranny of cruel and oppressive laws and the servile poverty imposed on them by their Hierarchy an idea of great and unparalleled magnificence. But our government and constitution was not like theirs. No cruel and oppressive forest-laws, imposing a penalty of death, or perpetual imprisonment, and

and the oar to the galley slave, pollute our code.—No *Letters de Cachet* arm the sovereign against his people—No rich and luxurious monasteries—No extensive domains held in mortmain—grind the poor, and deduct from their scanty industry the means to pamper pride, and recluse luxury.—Those were the heavy grievances under which they suffered, and from which they emancipated themselves.—But let me ask, is their present state an enviable one? and are the terrors and the panic fears that haunt them daily, unstable in their seats, and threatened with invasion, joys to barter national tranquillity for?—Blessed as we are with a constitution, they now seek to emulate,—the fond and partial object of all their struggles. Religion had no influence in this awful change; but, as an haughty and avaricious priesthood propped and upheld the monarchy, it was found necessary that they should be dispossessed of the wealth of the poor and reduced to their pristine poverty; and this was absolutely necessary to the reform that took place; for without decapitating the Hydra that guarded the throne, the task of reform would have been impossible, at least imperfect; and I will venture to assert, that, as that nation approaches our form of constitution and government, she will divest herself of those cumbersome and unneces-

fary ornaments that cloathed the old religion of the state—and * brother Peter, ashamed of his frippery “ shoulder knot,” a true emblem of servility, will be glad to reduce himself to the homely garb of John or Martin.

And this will be found no problematical assertion: If religions, indeed, be fashioned and adapted to the constitutions of different states—as I mean to contend for it, they are, and necessarily must be, and that, whenever France shall have purged her ancient constitution from its arbitrary dregs, her religion will assume the simple habit of its primitive purity.

But to return from this digression, which has been merely introduced by way of answer to such as would liken and assimilate the grievances complained of, by a very small part of the people in Ireland, to those on the Continent, which produced the Revolution there.

A political ferment has been raised, meetings are held, and resolutions are published; for what? That the “ entire code” existing against Non-conformists, may be “ abolished!” The gentle declivity that led to toleration is despised;

* Vide Swift's Tale of a Tub.

despised ; its windings were too tedious for the ardent spirit of these Reformers ; with eager haste and puerile avidity, they would reach the summit at a bound, and plunder the temple of the constitution of its choicest treasure—the *Right of Franchise* !——According to their Declaration of Rights, every barrier within which the National Religion has been paled, should be broken down ; and those entrenchments of law, with which the constitution of the realm has been surrounded for ages, levelled in the dust. 'Tis not sufficient that a body of men, aliens, as it were, to our government, and professing different and contradictory forms and tenets of faith from the national and established religion of the land, should have been permitted to take *long leases*, and mingle in civil rights with their protestant neighbours——They must assemble themselves together “ octennially ” that, the tumults of a popular election, already too great a grievance in our constitution, might be increased, and the intoxicated rabble, inflamed by religious frenzy, and the recollection of former animosities, might glut a sudden and savage appetite in cruelty and carnage. At that “ Octennial period,” which, to use the language of their *declaration*, “ returns to disturb “ their tranquillity, and revive the recollection “ on of their debasement ! ” A strong argument,

ment, doubtless, to prove the wonderful efficacy the boon would have, in removing former animosities, and purging all bad blood from amongst them!!

But, let us consider the reasonableness of the DEMAND;—for their language is not the mild stile of remonstrance, the meek effort of a calm spirit soliciting redress of grievances—but, loud charges of “insult and mockery” against us.

They would elect members to serve in parliament, and enjoy a share in the constitutional government of the country.—Let us examine the propriety of this measure, and endeavour to trace the true principles on which this privilege is denied them.—And, here it may be necessary to remark as I have before premised, that, living as we do in civil society, and not in the woods, it is the rights of citizens, and not those of men that are to be looked to.

According to Mr. Locke, “God, having
“made man such a creature that in his own
“judgment it was not good for him to be
“alone, put him under strong obligations of
“necessity, convenience, and inclination, to
“drive him into society.” And this social union and intercourse became a Common-wealth,
where

where men associated for mutual advantage, and entered into compacts with each other, called laws, for mutual benefit and mutual preservation. This is what we call POLITICAL SOCIETY. But, this union and harmony could not exist if each member in the community was governed by his own caprice, and not bound by some restriction and penalty; and, therefore, each individual sacrificed a portion of his natural rights to his political happiness, according to the "necessity and convenience" of the whole republic. For, man knew not then of the principles that govern arbitrary states, where one man sways many. "And this society is formed," says Mr. Locke, "wherever any number of men, in a state of nature, enter into society, to make one people, one body politic, under one supreme government; or else, where any one joins himself to, and incorporates with, any government already made. And, hereby, he authorizes the society, or which is all one, the legislative thereof, to make laws for him, as the public good of the society shall require."

"From this it follows," says he, "that ABSOLUTE MONARCHY, which by some men is counted the only government in the world, is, indeed, INCONSISTENT WITH CIVIL SOCIETY"

“ CIETY, and so can be no form civil of go-
 “ vernment at all.”

From hence it should seem that a Republican form of government, or that which approaches nearest to, and most intimately resembles one, is best adapted to promote the happiness of mankind; and that our Constitution, tho’ encumbered by many defects, and languishing under many corruptions; tho’ inflated where it should not, and contracted in some of its parts; tho’ the head be often too weighty for the members, and they too, frequently, rotten or refractory; yet, where it resembles this perfection of good governments, it is truly estimable indeed.

CIVIL SOCIETY, or in other words, a Commonwealth, became the first government wherein men aggregated for their mutual support: but something still was wanting to cement them more strongly, as well as to restrain their wild and unbounded passions—and this was RELIGION: impressed on their minds and laid open to their senses, in the vast and stupendous works of Creation; where they saw and felt a systematic arrangement of parts, and a regular return of those seasons, that diversify and enrich with plenty each revolving
 year

year. And in this a FIRST MOVER was obvious.—Then first arose that great and awful sentiment that pervades the human mind, and first taught it to inquire into the nature and principles of our being, as well as the origin of that internal sensation, we call thought: stimulating and restraining, alternately, the unruly appetites of men. Hence came a restraint superior to the magistrate—The consciousness of right strengthened by the dread of unknown power; imperious to the senses, and that awed by its sublimity,—a principle which deterred men, not by menace, or temporal infliction, from wrong-doing, but, by the distance and immensity of the idea, inspired them with reverence, and led them to fear Divine retribution.

The adoration of one God united men in one worship, and Christianity taught them morality. * “A pure and humble religion “gently insinuated itself into their minds,” holding out with ineffable meekness, the promise of Redemption to their hopes; and calling on them, emphatically, “to love one another.” But, the primitive simplicity of the Gospel was too pure to last; and the ambition

* Gibbon's Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.

tion of its professors, found it their interest to disturb a system, whose rewards *were not of this world*. They longed for temporal rule, and regal authority, and the consciences of men must be bound, to forward their pretensions. This was the first schism in the Church, and then, first, were heard of Councils to adjust matters of faith and of controversy.

The Christian Religion was split into diverse factions, and anathemas were hurled by each contending party, with equal rage and equal intolerance.

It would be both a tedious and uninteresting task to record these divisions in Religion, and their influence on the policy of different Governments. I am not writing an History of the Church ; and feel how ill qualified I am even in the present day, to separate one or two articles of Faith from the confused mass in which they lay confounded.

My purpose is merely to show that under our present form of Government, the ESTABLISHED RELIGION is the safest and the best ; and that, by any departure from those principles established at the Revolution we should forfeit our charter to independence and freedom.—In other words, THAT POPERY IS THE RELIGION

RELIGION OF MONARCHIES, AND TENDS TO PROMOTE, AS WELL AS UPHOLD, ARBITRARY SWAY; AND THAT, IF REPUBLICANISM BE MOST CONGENIAL TO HUMAN FREEDOM AND HAPPINESS, PROTESTANTISM, WHICH IS THE RELIGION OF SUCH A FORM OF GOVERNMENT, IS THE BEST FOR THE PEOPLE LIVING UNDER IT.—In laying down a proposition of this nature, so general and decisive, let it not be thought, that, I mean to arrogate to myself the merit of it. It is a maxim of Government, supported and maintained by the best authorities that have ever written on the subject, and I shall refer to their names and sentiments upon it, reserving to myself the privilege only of a comment. The influence of religious opinions, operating on the human mind, may illustrate the position. The philosopher may be amused, in tracing from its source the origin of bigotry: The politician too, will not reject a data, which reduces to its first principles the forms of the two chief Governments that divide mankind—Monarchy and a Republic—and which, in my mind, gave rise to that distinction of men as well as principles called, *Whig and Tory*.

And let me not in this be misunderstood, or miscited, in an idea as old as the Revolution,

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by those, who professing the name of the former, promulgate the doctrines of the latter; and who, by holding out false principles of patriotism, would pass for true members of an opposition, founded on the solid basis of that religion and policy which were established at the æra I allude to: an æra, that redeemed us from the most arbitrary and despotic sway, --from a turbulent aristocracy and a factious hierarchy;---from the dominion of priests and the See of Rome, and blessed us with the true light of liberty.

The arbitrary doctrines in 1678 were, Divine Hereditary Right, Passive Obedience and Non-resistance: all, all! incompatible with freedom. These were invented for the purpose of upholding James, the most arbitrary bigot that ever disgraced a throne, in his attempts to establish monarchy.

* “The Tories” in that day, according to Rapin, “believed all resistance unlawful, and “lineal succession unalterable, and considered “those who differed, enemies to the monarchy and the church.”

The Whigs, were formed upon a liberal “interpretation of the Non-resistance acts, which “they

* Rapin's Introduction to the Reigns of Jac. 1st. Char. 1st. Jas. 2d. and Char. 2d. vol. 3.

“ they understood with such restrictions, as
 “ rendered them consistent with the ancient
 “ Constitution”——That venerable and sacred
 pile, erected by the labour of centuries, and ce-
 mented by so much blood! and “ were chiefly
 distinguished by their opposition to Popery,
 and a Popish successor.” Can those, then, be
 called true Whigs who would introduce
 maxims of government so adverse to that
 compact, by which their true originals were
 bound? and are they not, rather, to be con-
 sidered and accounted as abettors of those
 who, according to Locke, “ * arrogate to them-
 “ selves and to those of their own sect some
 “ peculiar prerogative, covered over with a
 “ specious pretence of deceitful words; but,
 “ in effect, opposite to the civil right of the
 “ community?”

And here it may be necessary, as I have
 premised, to quote the whole passage from
 that great man, who was alike the ornament
 of the moral and political world, and whose
 writings will exist as long as men acknowledge
 a free government. The passage I allude to is
 written expressly concerning *Toleration*, and
 goes to show, that the principles of the Ro-

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* First Letter concerning Toleration, p. 250, 251.
 Folio Edition.

man Catholic Faith were, and are, if they continue the same, which, I believe, will not be disputed, inimical to, and inconsistent with a free constitution.

“ No opinions contrary to human society,
 “ or to those moral rules which are necessary to the preservation of civil society, are
 “ to be tolerated by the magistrate. But of
 “ these examples, in any church, are rare——
 “ For no sect can, easily, arrive at such a degree of madness, as that it should think
 “ fit to teach, for doctrines of religion, such
 “ things as manifestly undermine the foundations of society, and are therefore, condemned by the judgment of all mankind;
 “ because their own interest, peace, reputation, and every thing would be thereby endangered.” And here follows in the order of the book, that “ more secret evil,” which he says is also “ more dangerous to the Commonwealth,” which I have before alluded to, and of which he gives the following as an example. “ We cannot find any sect that
 “ teaches expressly and openly, that men are
 “ not obliged to keep their promise,——that
 “ princes may be dethroned by those who
 “ differ from them in religion, or, that the
 “ dominion of all things belongs only to
 “ themselves.

“ themselves. For these things proposed thus
 “ nakedly, and plainly, would soon draw on
 “ them the eye and hand of the magistrate,
 “ and awaken all the care of the Common-
 “ wealth, to a watchfulness against the spread-
 “ ing of so dangerous an evil.—But never-
 “ theless, we find those that say the same
 “ things in other words.—What else do they
 “ mean, who teach, FAITH IS NOT TO BE
 “ KEPT WITH HERETICKS? Their meaning,
 “ forsooth, is, that the privilege of breaking
 “ Faith belongs unto themselves; for they
 “ declare all that are not of their Commu-
 “ nion, to be Hereticks, or, at least, may de-
 “ clare them to be so, whenever they think
 “ fit.”—What can be the meaning of their
 “ asserting, that, “ Kings excommunicated,
 “ forfeit their Crowns and Kingdoms?”—
 “ It is evident, that they thereby arrogate to
 “ themselves the power of deposing Kings:—
 “ because, they challenge the power of excom-
 “ munication as the peculiar rights of their
 “ hierarchy.”

“ Those, therefore,” continues our Author,
 “ who, upon pretence of Religion, do chal-
 “ lenge any manner of authority, over such
 “ as are not associated with them in their Ec-
 “ clesiastical Communion: I say, those have
 “ no

“ no right to be tolerated by the magistrate:
 “ For what do all these and the like doctrines
 “ signify, but THAT THEY MAY, AND ARE
 “ READY UPON ANY OCCASION, TO SEIZE
 “ THE GOVERNMENT, AND POSSESS THEM-
 “ SELVES OF THE ESTATES AND FORTUNES OF
 “ THEIR FELLOW SUBJECTS, and that they
 “ only ask leave to be tolerated by the ma-
 “ gistrate so long, until they find themselves
 “ strong enough to effect it.”

And this from Locke, whose active mind
 first analyzed the human understanding, and,
 “ justified the ways of God to men!” Whose
 Essays on Government stand foremost, as per-
 fect models of human legislation, and whose
 Letters on Toleration evince him not only the
 Philosopher, but the humane and wise Moralist!

The authority at least is a good one; and,
 if I have erred in my principle, it will
 be some consolation, as well as excuse, that
 the most wise and subtle reasoner of his time,
 in affording me an argument, erred also.—I con-
 fess I love not doctrines that stand upon
 so much quirk and subtlety.—————
 “ *Non amo nimis argutam Theologiam,*” and,
 if, indeed, the Catholicks are free from such
 imputations

imputations as Locke has thrown on them, I see no reason why they should not purge themselves from the charge, by submitting to a Test the established Government demands, even from those within its own pale.

But we rest not on those authorities alone, however imposing; one, at least, as respectable presents himself—The great *Montesquieu*, a Frenchman, and a Catholic, living under an Arbitrary Government; whose “spirit of laws” has been received with respect and admiration by all nations.

In a * chapter written expressly on the subject, he maintains, “That the Catholic Religion

* De L'Esprit des Loix. Liv. xxiv. Chap. v.

“Que la Religion Catholique convient, mieux à une Monarchie, et que la Protestante s'accorde mieux d'une République.”

“Quand la Religion Chrétienne souffrit, il y a deux siècles, ce malheureux partage qui la divisa en Catholique et en Protestante, les peuples du Nord embrassèrent la Protestante, et ceux du Midi gardèrent la Catholique.”

“C'est que les peuples du Nord ont et auront toujours un esprit d'indépendance et de liberté que n'ont pas le peuple du Midi; et qu'une Religion, qui n'a point de Chef visible, convient mieux à l'indépendance du climat, que celle qui en a un.”

“ Dans

“ligion is most agreeable to a Monarchy, and
“the Protestant to a Republic.

I shall quote his words : —————

“When the Christian Religion, two centuries ago, became, unhappily, divided into
“Catholic and Protestant, the people of the
“North embraced the Protestant ; and those
“of the South adhered to the Catholic.”——

“The reason is plain : the people of the
“North have, and will ever have a SPIRIT
“OF LIBERTY AND INDEPENDENCE, which
“those of the South have not ; and therefore a
“Religion, which has no visible head, is
“more agreeable to the independency of the
“climate, than that which has one.”——

“In the countries themselves where the
“Protestant Religion became established :
“the Revolutions were made pursuant to the
“several plans of political Government.——

“Luther

“Dans les pays mêmes où la Religion Protestante s'établit,
“les révolutions se firent sur le plan de l'État, politique,
“Luther ayant pour lui de grands Princes, n'aucoit guere,
“pu-leur faire goûter un autorité Ecclésiastique qui n'aucoit,
“point eu de pré-éminence extérieure ; et Calvin ayant
“pour lui des peuples qui vivent dans des Républiques,
“ou des bourgeois obscurcis dans des Monarchies, puoit
“fort bien ne pas établie des pré-éminences et des dignités.

“ Luther having great Princes on his side,
 “ would never have been able to make them
 “ relish an ecclesiastical authority that had
 “ no superior pre-eminence; while Calvin
 “ having to do with a people who lived un-
 “ der Republican Governments, or with ob-
 “ scure citizens in Monarchies, might very
 “ well avoid establishing dignities and pre-
 “ eminence.”—And, here we find traced with
 ingenuity and candour, the original princi-
 ples that tend to the establishment of a parti-
 cular system of Religion in the formation of
 particular Governments, where any deviation
 from the original plan must tend to unhinge
 the form of the Constitution, and dismember the
 curious juncture of its parts. And these are the
 sentiments of an impartial writer who viewed
 at a distance, and, in the abstract, each form
 of policy, and saw, with an unprejudiced
 judgment, their defects and weaknesses.

He lived, too, under a Government where
 freedom of discussion was denied, and whose
 Religion was calculated to bind in fetters the
 free mind, and smother in its birth each new-
 born effort of freedom.—Yet, so general and
 so just were his maxims, that even Priests
 forbore to persecute; and, after a painful re-
 search of twenty years, a work arose unrivalled
 in the annals of states.

E

He

He did not, to use his own emphatic words,
 * “ Draw his principles from prejudices, but
 “ from the nature of things,” and having
 found the first link that formed so massy a
 chain of arguments, each separate and distinct
 one followed of course.—That “ lucidus
 “ ordo,” so difficult to attain, and so worthy
 of attainment, runs thro’ his whole work, and
 happy is he who can see and attain it.—So re-
 ceived has been this maxim of policy, that
 the avowed apologist of the *Tudors* adopts it
 every where. This eloquent and philosophic
 Historian in his character of the Catholics
 under *James*, tells us that “ † the Romish sys-
 “ tem remained the favourite Religion of So-
 “ vereigns. The blind submission which is
 “ inculcated by all superstitions, particularly
 “ by that of the Catholics; the absolute re-
 “ signation of all private judgment, reason
 “ and enquiry; these are dispositions very ad-
 “ vantageous to civil as well as ecclesiastical
 “ authority; and the liberty of the subject is
 “ more likely to suffer from such principles,
 “ than the prerogatives of the chief magis-
 “ trate. The splendor, too, and pomp of wor-
 “ ship, which that Religion carefully supports,
 “ are agreeable to the taste of magnificence
 “ that

* Vide Preface to *Le Sprit de Loix*.

† Hume’s History of England, in the reign of James I.

“ that prevails in Courts, and form a species
 “ of devotion which, while it flatters the
 “ pampered senses, gives little perplexity to
 “ the indolent understandings of the great.”

And it is in this “ magnificence of worship”
 that Montesquieu places the connection, with
 the constitution of an arbitrary state; particularly, † “ When, according to the doctrine
 “ that gives us the idea of a spiritual supreme
 “ Being, we can unite those of a sensible na-
 “ ture, and receive them into our worship,
 “ we contract a greater attachment to Religi-
 “ on.” And from hence he infers, that “ Ca-
 “ tholics who have more of this kind of
 “ worship than Protestants, are more attached
 “ to their Religion, and more zealous for its
 “ propagation.”—And it is these maxims that
 illustrate the characters of sects—and will con-
 tinue to do so—even when their controversies
 are forgotten.

E 2

What

† L'Esprit des Loix, Liv. xxv. Chap. 2d.

“ Quand, avec l'idée d'un Etre spirituel suprême, qui for-
 “ me le Dogme, nous pouvons joindre encore des idées sen-
 “ sible qui entrent dans le culte, cela nous donne un grand
 “ attachement pour la Religion. * * * * *
 “ * * * * * Aussi les Catholiques, qui ont plus
 “ de cette sorte de culte que les Protestans, sont-ils plus in-
 “ vinciblement attachés à leur Religion que les Protestans ne
 “ le sont à la leur.

What then were the principles that prevailed at, and established, the *Revolution*?—Previous to the Reformation, the exorbitant power of the Clergy, and the usurped authority of the Pope. Their power over the consciences of the people, and that of the Papal See, in even dethroning Kings—were grievances that demanded immediate redress—and called loudly for controul. An ambitious hierarchy surrounded the throne, and whispered arbitrary maxims into the ear of the Sovereign; the people were bowed down and oppressed under exactions, and their silent murmurs of discontent were drowned by Papal anathemas, or denunciations of divine vengeance, against such as denied their authority and controul. Superstition * “the delirium of piety and disease of weak minds, that profanes Religion by its fears,” whose † “prejudices are superior to all other prejudices, and its reasons to all other reasons,” was found the fit instrument in the hands of power to subdue a trembling people; astounded and confused by the fulminations of the Holy See, and incapable of comprehending the controversial points of divinity established by the different councils of the Church.—

When

* Marmontel's History of the Incas.

† Montesquieu.

When Martin Luther arose—a man worthy to be a Reformer, whose discernment and genius overpowered the reasoning of his adversaries, whose rough and steadfast pertinacity, whose rigid and inflexible integrity, unshaken amidst the storms that surrounded him, and unawed by their splendor, stood firm and immoveable, and atchieved, almost singly and alone, one of the greatest as well as most important events that have occurred in the annals of mankind. For him was reserved the glory of purging from its errors and defects, the Religion of Christ, and presenting it, in its primitive and uncontaminated simplicity, divested of the tinsel and tawdry glare with which priest-craft had clothed it, as a fit model from which to erect the lofty and towering structure of a free state. In this he laid the foundations of our present Constitution; and, whether the adaptation of his system to our present form of Government was merely fortuitous, and the effect of a stiff-necked and refractory opposition to the see of Rome; or, rather, as it should seem, a great effort of genius, that saw, at a glance, the most remote and distant analogies; and bursting thro' the impediments that restrain ordinary minds in their conjectures—in laying the first stone of the edifice, planned the systematic arrangement of its parts, and viewed the
great

great purposes to which it should be converted. Which ever of these was his motive—the present generation, as well as unborn millions, have reason to bless that divine ray of intelligence that descended upon him.

In thus tracing to their source the grievances that produced the Reformation—I trust, I have not appeared to deviate from my subject. The Revolution, I contend for it, was brought about by those principles that attached men to the ancient form of Government, and transmitted down to them from their fore-fathers.—It was corrupted, no doubt, in its passage thro' so many political vicissitudes, and polluted by the streams of faction, that poured into it on all sides;—but still, its very overflowings, like those of the Nile, became useful; and tho', for a season, they inundated the harvest, and robbed the husbandman of his tillage, yet, the land recovered its fertility;—the son of freedom again shone upon it, and men learned the art, to raise mounds, and to construct sluices, as well to protect them against future inundations, as to cleanse the country from the like contaminations.—These barriers were the LAWS—the work of much reflection and trouble.—Assailed by Popery from without, the Nation contemplated with
affright,

affright, the machinations of the Roman Pontiff, to undermine the Religion of the State: spies and informers multiplied apace, and nothing but the pusillanimity of a weak and capricious bigot, had atchieved the Revolution in 1688. A partial reform might, perhaps, have taken place, but the Abdication, alone, + was the crisis from which the Constitution recovered its convalescence, vigour, and beauty.—The different statutes enacted since that epoch, restraining Papists, clearly show the grievances complained of then, and how necessary they were for restoring tranquillity to the nation:—Since when, many of them have been totally repealed, and their severity gradually relaxed, as time matured the system, and intercourse, assisted and cherished by toleration, had calmed the agitations of popular discontent, and entwined the hearts of men in affinity and brotherhood.—* The Declaration of the Prince of Orange, upon taking into his hands the reins of Government, was calculated to soothe, and reconcile the minds of the disaffected, by restoring those “ magistrates, who had been unjustly turned out, to their former employments,” and confirming to the different Corporations and Cities, “ their ancient prescriptions and charters;”—and

* Vide Prince of Orange's Declaration of Rights.

and also, the Parliament in their privileges, and in all things which they should “ find
 “ necessary for the peace, honour, and safety,
 “ of the nation, so that there might be no
 “ danger of the nation’s falling at any time
 “ after under ARBITRARY GOVERNMENT.”—
 And this he confirms by a subsequent one, meant, as it should seem, to strengthen a confidence in his Government, and remove all aspersions that had been thrown on his Administration, by such as wished thereby to bring him and his measures into question and disrepute.—He therein declares his confidence, that “ no persons can have such
 “ hard thoughts of him as to imagine any
 “ other design in this undertaking than to
 “ procure a settlement of the religion, and
 “ of the liberties and properties of the subjects, upon so sure a foundation, that there
 “ may be no danger of the nation’s relapsing
 “ into the like measures, at any time hereafter.”—Such was the mild and expostulatory Declaration of our Glorious Deliverer, deprecating the “ hard thoughts” of men, and promulgating the designs of his undertaking.

More than a century has elapsed since that settlement of the Kingdoms; and experience has proved, and sanctified the advantages of
 our

our Religion, and Government.—And here let me not be understood to mean that form of *Administration*, which has impoverished and perplexed the British Islands; originating in one or two departments, and spreading its baleful influence around.—But, that solemn Compact, which bound the people together in the bonds of unity and peace,—which restored to us a pure Religion and the Constitution of our Ancestors;—that *pacta conventa*, so sacred and so binding on our consciences, from which we cannot depart without the grossest and most vile perjury to the State, a moral covenant entered into by the people with their governors, and from which they cannot deviate, without annihilating the very essence of that good faith, which holds them reciprocally together, in all their engagements.—For, to alter the present frame of our Constitution, or admit any incongruous innovation would be not only to uproot the present settlement of the State, but to destroy that pre-disposed and pre-concerted series, which led to its establishment, each member of which, is one of the massy pillars that support the pile.—And, with this, neither one man or any number of men, can dispense. For acquiescence, under social compacts, whether express or implied, is tantamount to the most solemn obligations,

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where

where that implied compact is for the good of the community.—Nor are we, lightly and inconsiderately, to call in question the engagements of our fore-fathers, or vainly arrogate to ourselves more knowledge and discernment.—They saw the evils in the germ, and plucked the tainted bud to save the future tree. They were in turmoil and exigence, and danger, had sharpened their genius, and bestowed on them that presence of mind, which, like a peculiar instinct in some animals, who divest themselves of the object of their pursuers in the hour of peril, flashes on them a conviction, in distresses and difficulties, of the best means for their preservation, which study and reflection had never supplied them with. They felt the heavy grievances of Popery, and collected all their strength, to throw them off. There is, moreover, a designation that man cannot make or resist. “There is a Providence that shapes his ends.” “Rough hew them as they may.”—— and peculiar circumstances in that day combined to strengthen and confederate the people against their oppressors, and assisted them to frame a wholesome code of provisions against their future occurrence.

Shall

Shall we, then, dissolve that solemn league so strictly ratified, and, forsaking the obvious landmarks our prudent predecessors raised, strike out into the wide and illimitable wilds of theory and speculation?—Shall we break the faith we owe to our venerable Constitution, by admitting, to the most important offices amongst us, men whose religion inculcates a contempt of all pacts, not made with one another? Shall we separate the Religion from the State, by ingrafting, upon the pure and indigenous stock of our faith, a scion exotic to our Government? Has not Montesquieu told us, that it is * “ a very good civil law when the
 “ State is already satisfied with the established
 “ Religion, not to suffer the establishment of
 “ another;” and that “ a Prince who under-
 “ takes to destroy or change the national Re-
 “ ligion of his Kingdom, must greatly expose
 “ himself?” That “ he runs the risk of a Re-
 “ volution?” That “ the ancient Religion is
 “ connected with the Constitution of the
 “ Kingdom, and the new one is not, for the
 “ former agrees with the climate, and very
 “ often, the new one is opposite to it. More-
 “ over; the Citizens, disgusted with their laws,

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“ look

* Le Esprit de Loix. Liv. 25. Chap. 10, 11.

verning party, or the legislature, if you would have it so, to estimate the conduct, character, and principles of the sect they are called upon to admit amongst them, and to consider, wisely, prudently, and maturely, before they adopt them as fellow labourers, in cultivating good Government, whether all these are inimical to the Established Religion or not.—And in this cautious estimate, it behoves them not to admit any doctrines, or suffer any opinions to be broached, that might lead the people to doubt, or question, the ancient purity of their system,—or afford an opportunity to a discontented faction, to forward their designs.—
 They should not listen to their *tumults*, for that is not the mode to seek redress of grievances. Nor should the magistrate be intimidated by menace, to grant concessions, that might unhinge the Constitution and embroil the State. For, should one link be broken of that golden chain that binds its Religion to it, wild anarchy and uproar must follow the unnatural divorce.

The Catholics are tolerated in their Religion amongst us, they have their own spiritual guides, they are guardians of their children and properties, they can dispose
 of

of both as they please. The sources of wealth are not closed against them; they crowd the Mart, and the Change, they purchase the soil of the land, and transmit it to their posterity. Their children are educated in their tenets, and the progress of a superstition that has been held inimical to the National Faith, and whose fervors has been found so destructive to the people, has not been checked by any penal ordinance: and the simple qualification required, for all these privileges, is a solemn declaration of allegiance to a Government, that has granted these indulgences. Yet they repine.—The road to ambition is not sufficiently open to them;—their mounting to the first offices is impeded by certain acts of conformity; and this is called oppression. * “ The whole legislative, the whole executive, the whole judicial power of the State, is in the hands of men, over whom they have no controul, and with whom they can have little intercourse.”

We know, then, what they want, and what policy has denied them. It is easy to declaim upon the natural equality of man, and the words Independence and Toleration have, more than

* Vide their Déclaration.

than once, been adapted to measures destructive of both. The vulgar are caught with the sound, and an agitated rabble rush forward, without a faculty of discriminating, to their own destruction.

I have, heretofore, endeavoured to show that the Religion and principles of these Declarants are inimical to our form of Government, and, proceeding upon general and abstract propositions, I forebore, as much as possible, to touch upon the former misdeeds of the sect, and that spirit of intolerance which governed their forefathers. They are buried in the dust; but the embers of that fierce flame, which blazed over all Europe, are not extinguished, nor could the torrents of blood which were shed allay their fervour.

Shall I recount the scenes of blood and carnage that marked the savage reign of a Mary; when a venerable and pious host of martyrs expired at the stake, for a mere difference of opinion, and, by their deaths, confirmed their faith? Or that massacre, on the feast of Saint Bartholomew, when in the centre of a polite nation, and in the midst of its capital, so many victims were immolated at the shrine of bigotry?

ty? Or, the terrors of the * Inquisition, that
 fame erected to fanaticism, and illumined by
 so many horrid fires, that superstition and
 mistaken zeal had kindled, and daily kindles
 for her victims? Or, that subtle and treache-
 rous plot, so artfully contrived, and so pro-
 videntially detected; to extirpate so many fa-
 milies, and, at one blow, annihilate our Re-
 ligion and Government? Or, as here amongst
 us, that savage and ruthless Rebellion, and those
 barbarous and unrelenting acts of cruelty,
 that throw a stigma upon human nature, and
 blot, from the reluctant mind, every sympa-
 thetic feeling of humanity and forgiveness?—
 Wherever we turn our eyes, a black catalogue
 of crimes present themselves, the effort and
 effect of intolerant *persecution*: Of a persecuti-
 on that, deaf to the cries of ignorance and
 unoffending infancy, where reason had not
 even established a choice in the mind, buried and
 confounded, in one punishment and one grave,
 those who had lost, and those who had not yet
 attained the faculty of judging for themselves
 or others!—Horrid Catalogue! Black and inex-
 piable cruelty!—Humanity would gladly cease

G

to

* *Torquemada*, the Inquisitor General, in 14 years tried
 above 80,000 persons, and of these he brought to the stake
 between 5000 and 6000! Vide VI. Letters on Intoler-
 ance, 1791.

to remember the cause from which originated such dire and abominable outrages upon God's best and fairest works in creation. But, impartial history relates facts as they are; not as Sectaries would have them. Has the Romish Religion been a Religion of Toleration and Forbearance? And have her Missionaries used the sword or the pen? Have her altars been wet with oblations only to the living God, or have they ran over with the blood of his creatures? Has the incense of her censers, mingled with the " sighings of a contrite heart," ascended in clouds to Heaven?—Or have they not been drowned by the groans of a persecuted people? Have Caravanferas and Hospitals been opened in her countries for the reception of the wandering Arab, or the unhappy and diseased Protestant that has been cast upon her coasts? The follower of Mahomet and the disciple of Christ have been confounded together in the dungeons of her Inquisitions, and, as worshippers of one God, have died together.—Were these the ruthless barbarities of an enraged people, whose altars had been overthrown, their ceremonies despised, and their images spit upon? And did a merciful and enlightened priesthood, rush between the victim and the destroyer?—No,—they artfully enflamed, by
subtle

subtle metaphysics, the disaffected mind ; and, blinded by scholastic divinity, the furious bigot rushed forward to immolate his fellow creature. —New and unheard of ceremonies and observances were enjoined, and principles of faith invented, to puzzle and perplex the obvious intent and meaning of the Gospel. The Doctors of the Sarbonne and those holy inquisitors wrested and expounded, as they pleased, for the vilest purposes, each text of scripture ; and the Jews, an harmless race, because rich and followers of their own law, were not the least numerous who suffered.

Philosophy contemplated, with amaze, these persecutions, and was astounded at the doctrines for which they suffered and which, if they had not been well authenticated, no reasonable man would credit. We read, that, where reason rejected a doctrine incompatible with her known laws and impervious to the senses, man punished man for that disbelief which God implanted in his nature, and the creature perished, because, the Creator had not fashioned his mind to believe in, and receive, an incongruous and incompatible absurdity! —Such were the horrors committed on the incredulous, to support absurd tenets ; when the

doctrine of Transubstantiation rode, triumphant, on the ruins of humanity.

This is not all. We have read, it is true, of acts similar to these; but we are told they were * “the political errors, or misfortunes, “of their ancestors.”—A very qualified and gentle mode of acknowledgement forsooth! Where the *error* was persecution and massacre, and the *misfortune*, a want of success in the vilest of all plots. But, regeneration has spread amongst them, and the sons bear no resemblance to their fathers. † “Immemorial possession, has confirmed the confiscations of “that period,” and, “the impossibility of “ascertaining the original proprietors,” is a cause why they “have slept over their chains!”

Let us review their conduct in the present day, and see whether they are incapable of disturbing the Government, and whether a “Rabble of Irish Catholics,” as they are called, would not be as prompt in the present, as in a former century, to glut their vengeance on those rigid task-masters, who, Pharaoh-like, have enslaved the children of Israel, and

* Vide Declaration of the Catholic Society.

† Ib.

and deluged a land of Saints with the Disciples of Luther.

The Revolution in 1688 gave rise to a political distinction, which the popish partizans of James availed themselves of, as a pretext for taking arms in his cause; namely, the difference between a King *de facto*, and a King *de jure*. For, as under the original settlement between the two countries, they were, alike, subject to the same prince, and had a similar jurisprudence. Any rising in Ireland against the Government of him, who was recognized as King of Great Britain, would have been held as Rebellion against the State, and the abettors of it subject to punishment and confiscation—and justly;—where the right of the Sovereign to the throne, was acknowledged in both kingdoms.

And here, it is not at all necessary, to my purpose, to enquire how that compact originated, whether, by the right of conquest, or an acquiescence on our part: 'tis sufficient, that immemorial usage has established the fact; and that, as James, before his abdication, was acknowledged King in Ireland, by all parties, so, his successor, William, became legally invested with his rights, by the invitation of
the

the people of England, and his conquest over the partizans of James here. The legality of that investiture is not disputed; and, by it, the Constitution purged itself of a great evil.—Hereditary succession to the Crown, unaided by the consent of the people. That consent is, I admit, implied, and consists in tacit acquiescence, but it is not, on that account, less inherent in the people. For, were it otherwise, a Popish Prince, like James, might mount the throne of his ancestors, and professing a religion different from, and inimical, to the Established one, domineer over his subjects, and by having the appointment of his own Ministers, and being the fountain of all honours, fill the nation with an aristocracy destructive to its liberties and national faith. And this is one among many, of the principles that bind the Religion to the State, and require from the Sovereign himself, a conformity of worship. For that is the guarantee of his political principles. The confiscations of that day were the penalties incident to the offence of *Læsa Majestatis*, and the just punishment for a revolt, to aid a monster unknown to our Constitution.—An arbitrary Popish Prince.—And, here the subterfuge will not avail those, who assert, that the *majority* of the people of Ireland, not being acquiescent to the formation

tion of the new Government, were not, and ought not, to be bound to submit to it: and consequently, that their resistance could not be construed into *rebellion*. For, if majority of opinions, in a part of, were to establish resistance to the whole Government; we might as well cite the Rebellion of 1745 as an instance, why the present family should not fill the throne.

And here let me, for a moment, dwell upon the argument of *majority*? so common to those who would establish Popery as the National Religion of the Government, by levelling all distinctions, and abolishing at once the restrictive code, that holds together the constitutional affinities. For, if the *majority* were to decide, and that the *vox populi* were literally the *vox dei*. The headless and wavering multitude without subordination, and submissive to no rule, must govern in all things. Then would be found, the danger of arming an ignorant and disaffected multitude. Then would the Common-wealth, torn from its foundations, reel to and fro and totter. Then must genius, learning, prudence, judgment, and discretion, yield to ignorance, madness, rage, avarice, and sloth. And, in lieu of order, subordination, and good Government,—
anarchy,

anarchy, misrule, and wild, and turbulent democracy, would tear and rend in pieces the regular and systematic series of department and magistracy. Were power given to the *majority*, men would have to encounter not *one* despot, but an hydra of tyranny; not *one* human arbitrary will, but millions of adverse and contradictory currents, running in every direction, ruffled by every gust of passion and caprice, and ready to swallow every system and every principle.—If *majority* were a reason why the people should govern; tumult and anarchy must be the inevitable consequence, where each individual would be actuated by a separate will or design. For, where there was no head—no law to restrain them, each individual would arrogate to himself the powers and authorities that should vest in a few chosen Magistrates.—By such a rule as this—all subordination must cease.—The army could not act without a leader, and discipline must be at an end.—The multitude,—the blind, and fluctuating multitude!—impelled by their own headstrong wills, would rush forward, like a mountain torrent, unimpeded by the mounds of lawful authority, and sweep all before them; or, agitated by various and tempestuous passions, toils and overwhelm each other in a sea of conjecture.

This,

This, in abstract reasoning is good; but, in our particular, stronger and more forcible.—The Roman Catholics are as five to one, at least, therefore, the *majority*; and how unnatural, say the advocates for Popery, that the few should rule the many,—that, all offices, civil and military, should be monopolized, as it were, by the *minority*, for, how can such a monopoly be consistent with the *Rights of Men*?—But, who are the *majority*?—A wretched, and ignorant class of men, the dupes of their own clergy, that breathe, but do not live, that compose a class of citizens in the State, and yet have no influence in the Government;—vassals to a few Chieftains, yet ruled in matters of faith, by an hierarchy adverse to the Government, illiterate and rude, living without social arts, or social habitudes, paying passive obedience to a priesthood, who grind them by arbitrary exactions, permissive, but not legal, and who, unaided by the Statute Book, have no terrors to inflict but penances, and no inducements to hold out but absolutions. Accustomed to look up to such pastors, they know no impulse but what they convey to them.—Of letters they are ignorant—Of Religion they are ignorant—Of laws they are ignorant.—They cannot read, for they cannot pay for instruction; and it is the policy of

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the

the sect to keep them illiterate. They know no moral system, for their ceremonies are all show, and their precepts are delivered in an unknown language. Lawless and unrestrained, they would acknowledge no Government but that of their Clergy, who are appointed by the See of Rome, and owe obedience to the Pontiff.

They tell us, it is true, this subordination is only in SPIRITUALS, and cannot influence their political conduct.—But, if a man is guardian of my faith, and that my conscience is in tutelage, who will pretend to convince me, that all temporal concerns will not yield to the influence of him who pretends to hold the keys of Heaven, and arrogates to himself infallibility, and the power of pardoning offences? Who absolves from all sin the most atrocious offenders, and who may, if he pleases, as well grant indulgences to murder and rebel, as to eat meat on Fridays? And this is no false deduction. For no man can believe, who is not a lunatic, that Heaven has granted to him peculiarly, so omnipotent a vicegerency, and who, exercising an authority of this nature, that so imposes on the understandings of men, and renders them subservient, will not, or may not, stretch it for the vilest, as well as the most harmless of purposes.

Such

Such are the tenets of this Religion, and such are its professors amongst us. And shall we rashly admit to govern us, a class of men so repugnant to our form of Government?—As five to one in numbers, and, but as one to fifty in education, talent, property, or industry. Yet, these men are to have a *FRANCHISE*. Shall such a proposition be endured and not meet immediate notice? Shall its propounders threaten, and not meet with chastisement? What! must we surrender our rights, purchased by our blood, and sanctioned by solemn league, and strict covenant, to a lawless rabble? For such are the majority of the Catholics in this country. An hungry and distressed race; or, if this privilege is confined to the few wealthy amongst them; what will it profit them, and how much may it endanger our freedoms? If they elect, why may they not be elected; and if Legislators, why not Judges? The throne is elective, and should the multitude vote indiscriminately, why not,—a Catholic King also?

The *RIGHTS OF MEN*, say they, are violated by all civil ordinations, let original and indiscriminate freedom be disseminated amongst us. Shallow Politicians—not to say corrupt ones; that would convulse the State which

tolerates you, by uprooting its most radical and fundamental establishments, and arming a blind and unsteady multitude, against the Government that nurtures them!! But, there is no danger of those evils, for "Immemorial possession," and the "impossibility of ascertaining the original proprietors," has removed all hopes of recovering the forfeited estates of their ancestors, or their situation, extent and value are forgotten. Can a reasonable man, for a moment, attend to an argument like this? Immemorial usage! Is the period so distant then, when those forfeitures took place? And has the Historians that record the offence forgot the offenders? Or, rather, has not tradition, ever faithful in the transmission of injuries to the most distant sufferers, recorded to each repining clan, the long and boastful annals of its ancestry? The poverty, we may at least fairly presume, of each proud melesian, has been diverted and consoled, by the recital of the names and riches of those fair domains their ancestors had ruled over; forgotten!—No! The invidious distinctions, and bigotted principles, that robbed the mansion of its lord, and gave his possessions to another, still live, and if the origin of the loss exists, the loss itself cannot but be remembered.

But

But were they obliterated from every mind, their designation unmarked, and their boundaries annihilated; might we hope, that no stronger principle than that of reprisal, would urge them to single out some adequate compensation; adapted, at least, and proportioned to the merits of its new master?

The very introduction of this hint as an argument, is proof of that inclination and leaning I allude to;—the recovery of ancient forfeitures. For if they were originally unjust, and that lawless oppression, and not self-preservation and necessity, first wrested their estates from them;—no power can alter their essence.—And no man dispossessed is inclined to allow the claim of his successor as a lawful one.

“ They have slept over their chains,” and this declaration is the trump that is to rouse them to action.—I blush for the honest heart that could be warmed, and beguiled into such a sentiment, and stand rapt in amaze and astonishment, that a manly and cultivated understanding could be made a dupe to the insinuations of those of his communion, who, flattering his talents, have imposed upon his understanding and his heart, and made him the ready instrument of their own interested and corrupt purposes. And here, let me once
for

for all, premise, that I take it for granted, that this Declaration, at least, has the concurrence of, and is subscribed to by the Catholics that have assembled together in Dublin: that its sentiments are theirs, tho' its stile and phraseology may be that of an individual. I do not sit down to encounter him, but them. It is not so much the men as the measure I resist:—The claim is audacious, and the doctrine abominable, and standing up for the freedom of my Country, its Religion and its Laws; I conceive myself acting the part of a good Citizen; and possessing, as I trust I do, and ever shall, a "*mens conscia recti*," defy the malice of my adversaries. They have laid, I know, a mine for their opponents, and a newspaper is about to be established for the purpose of disseminating their pretended grievances, and heaping obloquy and reproach on all that dare enter the lists with them. The embryo scurrility of that paper I do not deprecate; tho' I have heard the threats of the party against all those who shall take up arms or oppose them in this their Crusade. I know and admire, many enlightened characters amongst them, whom sentiment and urbanity might unite with us in the strictest bonds of affection and brotherhood; but the majority—an overgrown and decided majority! are, almost

most entirely, unacquainted with those delicate refinements that belong not to ordinary minds, and which teach forbearance towards the delusions and weaknesses of their fellow creatures.

There are amongst them men, benevolent and meek; learned and judicious; possessed of talents to adorn and enrich the State, and whose literary productions, if they had flowed, and been directed into other channels, had been found healthful and salubrious.—Unhappily for them, they were educated in the principles of a Religion not congenial to the growth of liberty, or great talents, and something is due to the venerable prepossessions of those, to whom they have been taught to look up with affection and duty: and the son or the kinsman, who, perhaps, if uninfluenced by them, would exert his natural liberality of principle, acquiesces in the form of their faith, rather than wound the feelings of those he has been accustomed to venerate.

But let me return, from this digression, to the Declaration itself. In it there are some statements glossed over with plausible ingenuity; whilst others evidently labour under apparent ignorance, or misconception of the facts.

facts. Such, for example, is the assertion of a grievance that does not exist, and if it did, would, undoubtedly, call loudly for redress; that the Roman Catholics “are restricted in the education of their children!” So far from it, that by an express * act in the present reign, Popish schoolmasters are allowed to teach school in this kingdom, and the rights of guardianship, as well as many the like privileges and immunities are granted to Papist residents. The only qualification imposed, is the Oath of Allegiance and Declaration, but, perhaps, the Oath itself, is considered by them in the way of this enjoyment, and that “conscientious” men should be tolerated without it. Yet, they are not averse to oaths, for a more solemn and strict one, enjoining greater difficulties than that of being loyal to their Sovereign, has been taken by them at some of their meetings; and the Deity invoked to witness their agreement and solemn league, to forward, by all possible modes, this their present undertaking

The Declaration of the Catholic Society has “challenged an investigation of their principles.”

* Vide 21st and 22d Geo. 3d. allowing persons professing the Popish Religion, to teach school in this Kingdom, and 30th Geo. 3d. explanatory of it.

“ ciples,” or I should not be so particular about circumstances that should be known to all, and statements that contradict themselves. I maintain that very extraordinary indulgences have been voluntarily granted, and that the Parliament of this Country, unsolicited, has removed every restriction and penalty which could render their well-being in the State, irksome or incommodious. Yet we are told, “ they may look, with envy, at an ARBITRARY MONARCH;”—and they contrast his Government with that of a “ thousand petty despots, whom at every instant they must encounter.” I profess I knew not till this moment, there were such amongst us, or, that our Constitution tolerated any. The LAWS are the only arbitrary sovereigns I know of, in our Government, to whom all must bend, and which acknowledge no superior. But men who will not submit to them, and who have had no share in their formation, but would resist their authority with force, may well consider every officer who acts under them and does his duty,—a petty despot!!

They look towards an “ arbitrary monarch” indeed, and so full of the design are they, that they could not suppress the expression their wishes dictated.

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We

We are told that "industry is repressed, " and that it is the interest of every man in " Ireland that the entire code should be abolished." But we are only told so, and the sapient dictum of those Reformers is to stand in the place of argument.

Is industry repressed? Does not their Declaration state, that—"part of the Catholics " are wealthy, and attached to their present " enjoyments, that they are engaged, for the " most part, in lucrative branches of commerce, and that, individually, they have " more at stake than those who PRESUME to " falsify their motives, and CALUMNIATE their " actions."—Here is reasoning with a vengeance where we are, with threatening and boastful assertion, told, we must not " PRESUME to falsify and calumniate their " motives or their actions,"—or enquire, how industry CAN BE repressed, where their acquisitions by commerce exceed the measure of former times, and that, individually, they are richer than those who " insult and mock " them!" Why cannot they console themselves then, with the enjoyments their riches offer;—nor madly, seek a competition in which they would be soon dissipated? A controverted election has an insatiable appetite for wealth,

wealth, and the honest acquisitions of those "lucrative branches of commerce," would soon moulder under a popular canvass for a County. And this is what would tend to "tranquilize the Country!!" where a craving and tumultuous croud of new voters were to be cajoled, bribed, and corrupted! Have we any sumptuary laws that restrain them in the expenditure of their riches, and prevent, or deny their possessing villas, splendid seats, furniture, rich cloathing, or costly equipage? Do they not enjoy the fruits of their industry? Are not the laws open to redress them? What partiality have they ever experienced in the administration of justice? In treaties of commerce, are not their interests considered as intimately as ours? and yet, "Industry" is repressed." Because an accumulated burden of saints days and holy days does not croud our Kalendar, on which the indolent artizan may pray, or get intoxicated, which is more venial, than breaking, by any handy craft, the sanctity of the festival. Besides, celebacy, is an admirable mode of encreasing the population of a country; and adding, consequently, to its riches! A Convent would prove more beneficial than a Work-house, and a Monastery, than a Manufactory!!! In short, let them be contented with what they

possess—Freedom and Toleration—riches, and the protection of the State, and not, by speculating too deeply, risk all these advantages. And, if a Senator should mock them, or a Statesman deride; let them console themselves in the words of the Roman Poet:—

“ Populus me sibilat at mihi plaudo domi, &c.”

There can be no doubt entertained of their not wishing to disturb the Government, for tho’ “ as conscientious men,” they cannot reform, yet, they offer a TEST, “ more unequivocal “ than a volume of abjurations,” and what is it—that “ speaks so loud, and thunders in “ the index.” An HOPE *to be free*, “ and an “ ENDEAVOUR *to be united*.” As if HOPE and ENDEAVOUR were sufficient to guarantee the people against every encroachment on their liberties. Would these unequivocal abjurers take HOPE and ENDEAVOUR in payment of a debt, or discharge of a covenant? Or would they pass upon the Government this flimsy security, as an indemnity against outrage and commotion; and a test of their future loyalty? When, from every preceding measure of theirs, we have every reason to doubt and suspect the sincerity of their professions. Their open and unequivocal declarations,

rations, on the contrary, call upon us to be circumspect and wary. For there are amongst them those who do not hesitate to declare, that our constitutional tenure is founded on original wrong, and forceable dispossession, and that the Protestant Religion should yield to that professed by the majority. But if the confiscations of their ancestors were really "forgotten," would the revival of obsolete claims tend to tranquilize the nation?—The answer is so obvious, that it would be "insult and mockery" indeed, to dwell longer upon it.

But let me dismiss my commentary on this their famous Declaration of Rights for ever. Were I to take it paragraph by paragraph, it would exhibit the same inconsistency, want of argument, and trifling subterfuge; which no flow of language, or polish of expression, can obviate, and which even the talents of its composer could not conceal. The demands themselves, are too momentous, and the subject too general and important in its own nature, to bind us down to a particular and partial answer to the sentiments, for arguments they are not, of a few interested and factious individuals.

TOLERATION,

TOLERATION, I admit, should be extended towards them, on the most liberal grounds, and they are tolerated, I contend for it, as far as the State can tolerate them, consistent with its own safety. They worship the Deity according to their own mode, and even MID-NIGHT Masses are not forbidden, or prevented by the Magistracy, tho' in the proceedings of their boasted National Assembly of France, I read, this moment, a resolution moved to suppress them as tending to sedition.

They build Chapels, and even we, of the reformed Religion, subscribe and build for them. They have their charities, and we, who are Protestants, contribute our mite, and raise collections, to relieve the indigent amongst them. We erect and endow Sunday Schools, to aid the poverty, and enlighten the understandings of our Catholic brethren, and yet, we are, insolently and dogmatically, told, that we grind and oppress them, and that they "are preserved by us, but as a source of "Revenue!"

At the moment that Toleration extends her fostering arms towards them, and holds up to the unenlightened multitude, a resource, their spiritual pastors never instituted;—the education

tion of our peasantry, and an attempt to open and expand their minds ; a cry is raised against us, and we are, unjustly, and ungratefully, charged with " mockery and insult."

I admit, in the most extensive latitude, how enormous a degree of persecution it would be, to force men into a Religion they had not been educated in, or brought up to, by imposing penalties for non-conformity, and obliging them by force, to enter our pale, or relinquish their native land for ever. But where they are only excluded from offices of trust and confidence, upon certain conditions, which, by performing, they may enjoy, it becomes an act of prudence, and not of intolerance.—And in this, how different are our maxims from theirs ? They punished with confiscation, and even death ; the reluctant proselyte and a "*Droit d'Aubigne*," with fiend like vengeance, pursued their mouldering relicks even beyond the grave ;—Christian Sepulture was denied to the miserable remains of those who died in Catholic countries, unabsolved by the Priest ; without the mark of Popery upon them, or that Extreme Unction which could alone entitle them to a few feet of mould to cover, and conceal the most afflict-ing sight that humanity can pause over ; and
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the goods of the deceased, were the property of the Monarch.

With us there is no such vengeful and unnatural law. Our code breaks not into the chambers of the dead, or drags them from burial, and they will and dispose of their property as they please.

To subject a man to a grievous and oppressive penalty, for refusing or neglecting to subscribe an opinion he thought inconsistent with his Religion, and imposing a fine, or a forfeiture, for not frequenting or joining in a particular religious worship, would be persecution indeed. But, the mere incapacitating him from holding places of trust and confidence, under a Government whose Established Religion he rejects, and against which his principles militate, is rather an act of prudence than persecution.

To incapacitate him, also, from the enjoyment of his natural and hereditary right, to the estate of his ancestor, or from purchasing with the honest fruits of his industry, a new one, would be equally unjust. There, each laudable effort for support would be blasted, and the Commonweal deprived of the
assistance

assistance of a good citizen. But, it is far different where honours and emoluments of state are in question; their policy enacts the penalty for non-conformity, and the obstinate or refractory bigot, is excluded from them, because he refuses the Test the Nation has thought fit to impose, as a guaranty, for his integrity.

To exclude a non-conformist from a profitable post or employment, is, no doubt, an hardship on the individual so excluded, and he may complain of it as such. But, the preservation of the State has made it necessary, and having an alternative, he is not justified in any attempt, to obtain that by force, which he had in his option, and rejected. Nor can it be twisted, by any subtlety, into the form of a punishment: No more than if my constitution requiring a regimen, and that I reject it, the malady I consequently labour under, can be complained of as such.

To exclude such a person who dissents from the regulations imposed by our establishment, from any share in the departments under it, and refuse him admittance, as long as he continues so to do, to the Bar, the Army, or the Church: Can no more be called a punish-

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ment, than the exemption of him from a military duty, who is naturally undersized, or deformed, for he too has been guilty of no crime, and cannot add one cubit to his stature.: Yet, his exclusion is necessary to the symmetry of the whole regiment; and there is a martial law that justifies it. And tho' he cannot wear a red coat, he may enjoy another place in the community.

Can then the wholesome provisions we have made for the preservation of our constitution, not mere speculative preventions, but radical and necessary remedies, for disorders the Body Politic had laboured under, be called unnecessary, or persecutions; when establishment has been the caution of all Governments, and exclusion, the policy of the wisest of States?

From the reign of the benevolent Trajan, to the present day, exclusion of non-conformists has been the cautious policy of every State. A fearful jealousy, no doubt, inculcated the maxim, where every attempt to substitute a mode of worship different from the established mythology, gave alarm to the Government.

The spirit of the Roman Republic was not tolerant, and the refractory opposition to its laws, provoked a liberal and enlightened people,

ple, to oppress the primitive Christians, whose frequent and midnight assemblies, were thought preludes to sedition, and of so dangerous an aspect, as induced the * younger Pliny, when proconsul of Nicomedia, to address the Emperor, particularly, concerning the mode of treatment he should adopt towards those refractory spirits of their time, whom he describes, as “ practising an obstinate kind of superstition carried to great excess ;” and apprizes him that “ he had already suppressed all their PUBLIC MEETINGS ”

The “Heteriæ” were assemblies held before day, and of a very mysterious nature, in which the primitive Christians, like our modern schismatics, bound themselves to the performance of particular acts, by a solemn oath or sacrament: sufficient in its own nature, to awaken the vigilance of a jealous Government. Their non-conformity to the few trifling ceremonies enjoined by the Roman Law, and their OBSTINATE refusal to acknowledge by an act of obeisance to the statue of Trajan, their ALLEGIANCE to his person and government,—a figurative mode of professing their loyalty, no doubt, were sufficient in themselves, to call

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* Vide Pliny's Epistles, Letter 97, page 442, 443.
(Orrery.)

down the vengeance of the state, whose worship and ordinances they derided and contemned. The laws of the Twelve Tables are explicit, as to this maxim of ancient, as well as modern policy; and enacted, that † “apart,” “no one should have new Gods,”—those of “strangers, let no one worship privately, “unless they be publicly allowed.” And from hence, it is to be inferred, that it was the privacy and frequency of these meetings, held by people who despised the tutelary Divinities of the State, that gave umbrage to the Magistracy, and induced the Roman people to take every possible mode of crushing a wild and headstrong fanaticism that, at least, THREATENED the subversion of the Established Religion and Government.

From what I have said, it cannot be inferred, that I am an advocate for the Polytheism of the ancient world:—Tho’ I cannot well conceive that a people so wise and ingenious, should adopt it, as any thing more than a typical and figurative mode of illustrating, to the vulgar, the divine attributes of the Deity; or, that they were more culpable in the eye
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† I find the following law of the twelve tables, in *Letters on Intolerance*, published in the present year, I believe they never have appeared but in fragments.

of reason and philosophy for so doing; than the Catholics of the present day, in paying adoration and homage to the images of their Saints and Martyrs. Or, that they considered a figure of wood, or a painting on canvas, aught else, than as a symbol of the Justice and Mercy of the Creator. No more than we do the figures representing Faith, Hope, and Charity, as the presence of the virtues themselves residing amongst us. Toleration, then, like the natural equality of man, in certain cases, becomes incompatible with civil freedom. A few individuals may profit by it, but, the Establishment itself must fall a victim to its unqualified introduction.

All coercive laws being founded upon some known mischief and inconvenience, that has arisen, or may arise in the community; a total repeal of them must originate the like calamities. Liberality and Toleration between man and man, are good, and our frail and erring natures, reciprocally, demand the exercise, and return of both; but in a State where men are mingled and crowded together, the experience of past inconveniencies, arising from the want of restrictions, should ever bind them in an adherence to their spirit. The dear-bought knowledge we have acquired, by the
experience

experience of ages, should not lightly yield to a sentiment, or a sympathy.

The Roman Catholics, when in power, were never found so forbearing and tolerant, as their Protestant brethren. From the reign of Constantine, to the present hour; persecution has been their favourite pursuit. The Christian Religion, till purged of its impurities and vengeful fires, by Martin Luther, tho' it held out the angelic salutation, of "Peace and good will towards men," yet they advanced its bloody banner till it waved triumphant on the battlements of the Inquisition;—a tribunal erected to subjugate the very thoughts and consciences of men.

The ancient Crusades, like more modern levies, were a struggle for power, commenced in oppression, and were continued, in a lust of dominion and riches; when myriads of armed fanaticks, roused by an aspiring hermit, desolated the world. All Christendom groaned beneath exactions and contributions, to assist those champions of the Cross, who, blinded by the splendour of the enterprize, saw not the ambitious designs of the Pontiff, till famine, disease, and approaching death, had removed the mist of delusion. Those were the glorious enterprizes of the Mother Church! Nor have her persecutions been less felt at home than abroad;

abroad; we still continue to bend over the annals of blood, and to walk on the graves of innumerable victims, slaughtered by religious zeal. Liberality and humanity were far removed from their minds, during those outrages upon nature and on man, and tho' as individuals, each may partake, in some degree, of the milk of human kindness; when associated and combined, each particular grievance, assimilated with, and added to the rest, gives an accumulated image of suffering to the whole body, that invites to no lenient modes of redress. As a body of men, they consider themselves not bound to keep faith with us of the Reformed Religion.—As a body of men, they have ever acted counter to our systems of policy.—As a body of men, they continue adverse to our mode of governing, and inimical to our form of worship, and, as a body of men, we are not, in civil policy, bound to listen to their demands, or grant to them an ascendancy over us. We have gone far enough already. Regardless of their religious tenets, we admit them into our University; and some of their most shining advocates have been educated there. They cannot take a degree, it is true, but, what would a degree avail them, who do not seek Protestant ordination?

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They have those who call themselves Lawyers amongst them, and practise as such, who advise them in and frame all their deeds of purchase and renewals of obsolete claims, and who will, and have, no doubt, taken care, to peruse and amend their several publications, and compound them according to rule, so that no unreasonable or libellous ebullition may arise thereout; and who, tho' they cannot harangue a popish jury, or puzzle an ecclesiastical court, with Jesuitical sophisms, may, nevertheless, by industry and application, acquire large fortunes. They have, I maintain it, a more than sufficient controul over the Government, and compose a numerous body of the National Constituents amongst us: For, if the Legislative authority is derived from, and emanates out of, the landed property of the country, and that, the proprietor of the soil has influence over the tenant, in proportion to his acres; how can it be said, with truth, that "he has no controul over power?" When leases for 999 years, or five lives, have given him absolute dominion over his property; and the right of distress, and re-entry, common to all such leases, has created for him a degree of influence over his freeholder, nothing short of that exercised by Protestant landlords.— With me, this circumstance of influence and controul

controul is a conclusive argument against granting any greater enlargement of their legislative power, and should amply content them, did they, sincerely, look no farther than towards a simple right of Franchise. A right their present possessions, virtually, give them, and which they exercise, by that influence, over their protestant tenantry.

It has been said, I know, and relied upon that, * as Electors are limited and compressed, the election becomes less independent and free, and the elected more open to corruption: because, say they, men of rank and large estates do more injury by the weight and importance of their influence and wealth, than those who possess less of both,—and, consequently, that, by admitting Catholic Freeholders to vote, the evils complained of, would be counterbalanced by a majority more diffusive, and “occasional votes destroyed.”

For my own part, I always considered, that, in proportion to their rank and fortunes, men were less liable to temptation, as being farther removed from the two main sources of corruption,—ambition and avarice. And it is on this account that members for Counties

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* Vide Pamphlet, intitled “Constitutional Interest of Ireland, with respect to the Popery Laws, &c. 1791.

are better Patriots than representatives for boroughs. Their weight over voters can be no argument: for the more independent the voter, the higher the bribe must be. And if majority of voters is a reason why they are to be inaccessible to bribery, from their numbers, I can only say, that which would completely influence them, when spread and dissipated among numbers, perhaps, would be found insufficient to insure the concurrence of the few who were above a trifling gain; and who, being more enlightened and less necessitous, might reject with scorn and disdain, any attempt to corrupt their integrity, or bias their consciences. Besides, the admission of Catholic voters would not tend to lessen occasional ones, as they are called, I suppose, from qualifying themselves by perjury. For here the horns of the dilemma again present themselves; and that faith which may be broken with obstinate Heretics, would surely supply some mental reservation to cloak a trifling perjury.

But this is not connected with the object of the present treatise. I meant not to discuss the necessity of a Parliamentary Reform now, —nor shall I.—What may be the best mode that should be adopted for its attainment, or
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in what such a reform should consist, is alike foreign from my plan? It may give rise to future discussions; but, that the introduction of Popery and popish principles, should be the only effectual remedy for attaining a desirable one, required only as a means to restore greater FREEDOM and INDEPENDENCE to the subject, I shall ever hold a paradox in politics,—so long as Popery retains its present maxims of policy as well as of religion. Contending, as I have done, that freedom and independence never flourished, or can flourish, in any Government controuled by the arbitrary maxims of her Church.

Heretofore I have, studiously, endeavoured to keep as close as possible to the subject matter in question, and to confine myself, as much as might be, to the abstract principles of policy I have laid down, in the commencement of these Observations. Yet, I still fear, my deviations have been many, and that, I have, notwithstanding a very earnest endeavour to the contrary, been too diffusive on a subject that required simple definition, and clear and accurate deductions.

I sat down, I confess, with a strong conviction, on my mind, of the advantages re-

sulting from our present political system, and the dangers that might arise from any alteration in the National Religion, or the policy connected with it. Those dangers I saw, were anticipated in the formation of that Constitution which we now enjoy, and provident measures adopted to prevent their occurrence. I saw likewise, the evils in detail, that had from time to time, assailed the citidal of freedom, and to resist which, the present restrictive laws were raised. In first principles, I found this beautiful arrangement and symmetry of parts, that have made the British Constitution the admiration and envy of other States; and perceived the curious and intimate connection that existed between its different and various analogies. I consulted those who had written on Government and National Polity, in the abstract; and their concurrence, in what I had deemed a discovery of my own, gratified that selfish vanity, which every man feels, in arrogating to himself any peculiar faculty of invention or astuteness in unravelling of difficulties and doubts. I have cited them truly and dispassionately, and if, an ebullition of resentment, at the persecutions that have been heretofore practised, for mere difference in opinions, has arisen in my mind, or fallen on my

my paper with a glow which the enthusiasm of the moment gave it; let the candid and humane man, set it down to the account of an urbane, rather than a vindictive motive.

In the cause of humanity, I trust, I shall ever feel warm, and let me acknowledge a frailty, if it be one, that, in reading or reflecting on the miseries and deaths which men have prepared for one another, on a theme that should unite all, the current of my blood is increased, and my expressions take a form and colouring from the fervour of my indignation.

If there are prejudices peculiar to different modes of education, and that men are tenacious of the Religion inculcated in their minds from their birth, by those they most respected and revered, let them not arm themselves against each other, on that account; but, practice mutual forbearance. But, if the prejudices of one party have carried them lengths incompatible with toleration, and that, not content with the practice of their own faith, they have forwarded, and would again forward their system, and promulgate their tenets at the point of the sword;—and make profelytes by compulsion.—

compulsion.—Then I say, resistance becomes necessary; and the Legislature is bound, for the tranquillity of the whole State, to repress the unwarrantable practice. Men must conform to the institutions of the Government, or they should not be permitted to live under its laws. But, if they would change those, or attempt to subvert the ancient Constitution, by the introduction of new and incompatible ones, they are not good Citizens, but corrupt and designing men.

I am no enemy to a CHANGE, provided that it be a change approved of by all, or only resisted by men in power, who have their interested motives. Many reforms are necessary, I admit; and a Parliamentary one, perhaps, not the least so. But this is not the desirable mode, and the one proposed by these Levellers, cannot be considered in any other light, than as a shield to cover and conceal, very dark and designing measures. The name and authority of a LARGE BODY OF MEN has been adopted by a FEW who, fortunately for us of the established Religion, were impelled to sudden and crude measures, suggested by the importunity of their fortunes, and the avidity of their hopes; and who, never consulting, had never surmised, that, the respectable and
united

united majority of the catholic body would step forward, and boldly and openly *disclaim* any share in the measures of those disaffected schismatics. Those respectable names annex to the different declarations of Loyalty that have been published, step forward, as they ought, with modest and respectful diffidence, and throw themselves upon the * “wisdom and discretion of the Legislature,” with “gratitude” for the “indulgences” they have already received, and an extension of which they may hope for, by similar acts of moderation.

It appears then, that the Declaration of the WHOLE CATHOLIC BODY OF IRELAND, is nothing more than a figurative mode of expression, peculiar to those men;—and that, in fact and in truth, their declarations are not those of the people. If they, really, wished that their demands should be attended to, they would not have called to their aid a mass of angry publications, and newspaper scurrilities, calculated to sour the most dispassionate mind against them, and provoke an irresistible opposition to their cause.

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* Vide Address from the Roman Catholics of the Kingdom of Ireland, to Lord Westmoreland, Dec. 27th. 1791.

For my own particular,—I have ever, heretofore, felt myself a warm friend to their interests, so long as they appeared to me in the passive light of a suffering and unresisting people;—and ever wished to see them, gradually, advanced to every right of Citizenship, not incompatible with the liberty and personal safety of individuals, or the Empire.—But, their overweening demands must shock and disgust even the liberal mind, and, like the hectoring bravadoes and bullying threats of a sturdy mendicant, induce it to withhold the reluctant contribution he would extort by menace.

Born and educated in the Country, I could never be an enemy to its prosperity. But, would the total repeal of the Popery Laws increase the population, advance the wealth, or add to the national industry and contentment? I contend for it—not;—if the few observations I have made, on their spirit and meaning, are at all applicable to the subject at large. The indolence, sloth, beggary, and squalid filth of all the catholic countries in Europe, present an image to the mind, far different from the neat and prosperous competence and happy industry of an English peasantry, or the no less hopeful state of northern

northern inhabitants. They, too, pay taxes and tythes, tho' as Dissenters, they maintain also their own Clergy, yet they repine not, and their labour supplies them with a sufficiency for both. But then, they have no hungry Priests or mendicant Friars, and a preposterous series of festivals, do not arrest the plough in the furrow, or the shuttle in the loom.

The propositions that have been made for an union between the Presbyterians and the Catholics, and that two Religions ever accounted adverse and inimical to each other, should coalesce for the overthrow of the Established Church, is one of the most unaccountable events that has ever occurred. High Church and Low Church! Monarchical and Republican principles! jumbled together, like vinegar and oil, till by agitating each other, they mingle and assimilate; is, a sauce in political cookery, that no appetite but the most depraved one would adopt, in lieu of the wholesome and simple beverage a healthful constitution delights to partake of. Those now friendly brothers, Peter and John, I fear, will again quarrell over their cups, and leave the fragments of the feast to Martin

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to sup upon. Whatever may be the event, the Nation is called upon, to keep a watchful eye over her interests both in Church and State, and leave those Reformers to squabble together, and, like "a whale on shore, con-
 "found themselves by working." They may assure themselves, I should never have obtruded on their present festivity, and harmonious intercourse; did I not consider it incumbent on every good citizen, to confute a catalogue of grievances that exists no where but in the feverish and disturbed imaginations, of a few besotted individuals, who beslobber each other over their liquor, with disgusting and unnatural fondness, and who will, no doubt, end the debauch in mutual recrimination, and by knocking each others brains out.

But, their Declaration complains of grievances that do not exist, and every page of it is filled with reproachful epithets and charges against the Government. They are "mocked" and "insulted"—"they have no controul over
 "power"—"they are kept as a source of
 "revenue only"—they are *in carcere et in vinculis*.—They have "stept over their chains." All which exaggerated and mock grievances, as well as those scraps of disaffected nonsense, disseminated in every street, and gratuitously
 given

given to the most ignorant class of mankind, complaining that "they are bought and sold," that "they are yoked and laden with heavy "burdens" and that they are "fleeced and led "to the slaughter"!!! Manifestly tend to deceive the vulgar, and rouse them to some act of desperation. It therefore became every man to undeceive his fellow subjects, and to deny in the very teeth of their Declarations,—that these slaughters and "burdens," this vassalage and captivity do, really or at all exist, but are the fabricated artifices of wolves in sheeps-cloathing, who would steal upon the flock, and "fleece" them, in good earnest; and that those asses who bray so loudly, are laden with no other "burdens," than their own consciences.

Much more might be said on this subject, and I fear, many will think too much has been said already. But every dispassionate man must allow, that those discontented and factious publications should not have been permitted to pass unanswered; tho' perhaps, neglect or ridicule would prove the best weapon with which to encounter them. I have forbore to point at, particularly, the individuals who have fanned a spark of discontent into a disaffected blaze. They, certainly, are

not the most moderate spirits in the community, who would embroil a whole nation in the horrors of a * “ CIVIL WAR,” and who tell us that “ Peace has hitherto been a peace on the principles, and with the consequences of SUCH,” and that the “ TRANQUILITY” which this country has enjoyed, for “ a century past,” “ has been the tranquillity of a “ dungeon !”

Happily for us, there are but a very few who see objects thro’ such a medium, and whose distorted opticks can thus magnify into evils; the greatest blessings society can enjoy, —peace and tranquillity, both at home and abroad.

They use the language of slaves, and would pass for freemen—and by confounding the habits of natural and unimproved equality, with the principles of artificial and social conformity, call loudly for the “ manumission” of three millions of people. That by imitating the policy of the Roman Saturnalia, we might afford a dreadful lesson to posterity, of the miseries that must result from blending and confounding an ignorant and tumultuous peasantry,

Vide Resolutions of the Society of united Irishmen.

peasantry, with the nobility and their rulers, and that, without any previous qualification, we should change our form of Government into a wild and furious Democracy. For into this point, do all their systems of reform resolve themselves.

Should the schemes of those reformers be carried into effect, the present social contract, would be destroyed, the frame of the Constitution shaken and unhinged, and each department and ministerial office totally changed or overturned.

To be happy in society, and enjoy the comforts it bestows, men must relinquish some portion of their natural equality, and learn to submit. * For “such is the constitution of
“ CIVIL SOCIETY, that while a few persons
“ are distinguished by riches, by honours, and
“ by knowledge, the body of the people is
“ condemned to obscurity, ignorance and
“ poverty.”

* Gibbon's Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, Vol. 2d. Page 306.

F I N I S.



